



Cell Phone Addiction at UB? A Preliminary Survey

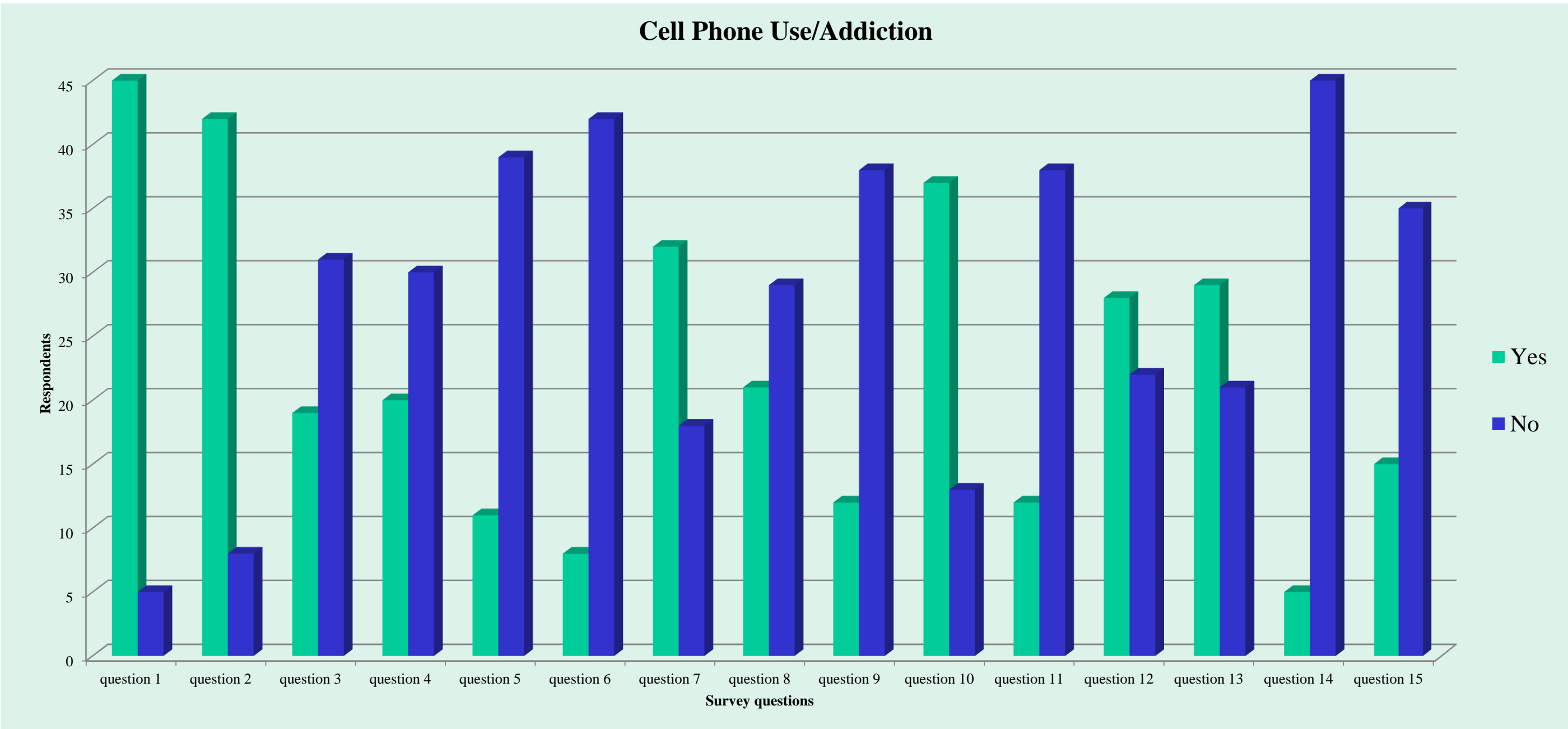
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Introduction

Merriam Webster on line dictionary defines addiction as “a strong and harmful need to regularly have something or do something”. Humans have a need to communicate. When Antonio Meucci invented the telephone in 1849, he expanded our ability to communicate but probably did not suspect that his device would evolve to invade our consciousness and dominate our time and lives. This survey was designed to explore cell phone addiction on the UB campus.

Cell Phone Addiction Survey Results

The survey consisted of fifteen questions listed in Figure 1 with responses depicted in the graph below. 50 individuals participated in the survey by responding, yes or no, to each question. “Yes” responses suggested addiction, while “no” responses suggested non-addiction. Responses to questions 1, 2 and 10 strongly suggest addiction, whereas responses to questions 5, 6, 9, 11 and 14 strongly suggest non-addiction. Responses to the other questions were inconclusive.



Graph Show number of respondents to each question based on a yes or no answer.

Survey Questions

1. Do you have your cell phone with you constantly; even at home you have it in your pocket or right next to you? **Yes_ No_**
2. Do you fiddle with your cell phone whenever you have downtime (even when you're not on the phone or you only have a very few minutes to kill)? **Yes_ No_**
3. Do you find someone to call as soon as you leave the office or land in a plane? **Yes_ No_**
4. Do you always feel anxious about your cell phone, especially when you are unable to use it (meeting, plane, class, church)? **Yes_ No_**
5. Are you uncomfortable and fidgety when you are not using your cell phone? **Yes_ No_**
6. Do you feel the need to talk on the phone almost all the time? **Yes_ No_**
7. Do you take cell phone breaks while at work/school? **Yes_ No_**
8. Do you usually talk on your cell phone while driving or walking? **Yes_ No_**
9. Do you experience high levels of anxiety, stress, or insecurity whenever you are without your cell phone? **Yes_ No_**
10. Do you sleep with your cell phone under your pillow or on a night stand right next to the bed? **Yes_ No_**
11. Have you ever been teased because you had your cell phone while working out or some other activity? **Yes_ No_**
12. Do you sometimes believe your phone is ringing, but when you answer it or listen longer you find it wasn't ringing at all (known as 'phantom ringing')? **Yes_ No_**
13. Has your personal cell phone use increased significantly? **Yes_ No_**
14. Do you feel stress when the cell phone bill arrives, then shock once you actually see the amount? **Yes_ No_**
15. Are you unable to resist special offers on the latest cell phone models? **Yes_ No_**

Figure 1 showing survey questions to depict the level of cell phone addiction per person.

Sociological and Psychological Issues

- A decrease in direct face to face conversation and an increase in indirect conversation (over the phone or online)
- Technostress: Stress cause by technology
- Cyberbullying or online bullying: mostly affecting teenagers
- Loneliness and isolation due to replacing direct person to person interaction with remote phone-based interaction.

Suspected Biological Effects of Cell Phone Addiction

Some health effects that can occur from excessive use of cell phones include:

- Light from cell phones at night can adversely affect the body's biological clock.
- Long conversations, and continuous loud music on the phone can damage the ear, and possibly cause hearing loss, pain and/or ringing of the ear.
- Non-ionizing radiation emitted from cell phones may lead to long term health effects including, cataracts, headaches, and possibly brain tumors.
- Improper body posture while texting can cause pain, especially in the neck.

Conclusion

The rapid growth of cell phone and related technologies has created a contradictory and stressful state where near-constant connectedness has resulted in feelings of loneliness and isolation. Addiction to these technological marvels may well be eroding an essential component of our human nature – our need for interpersonal face to face communication.

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